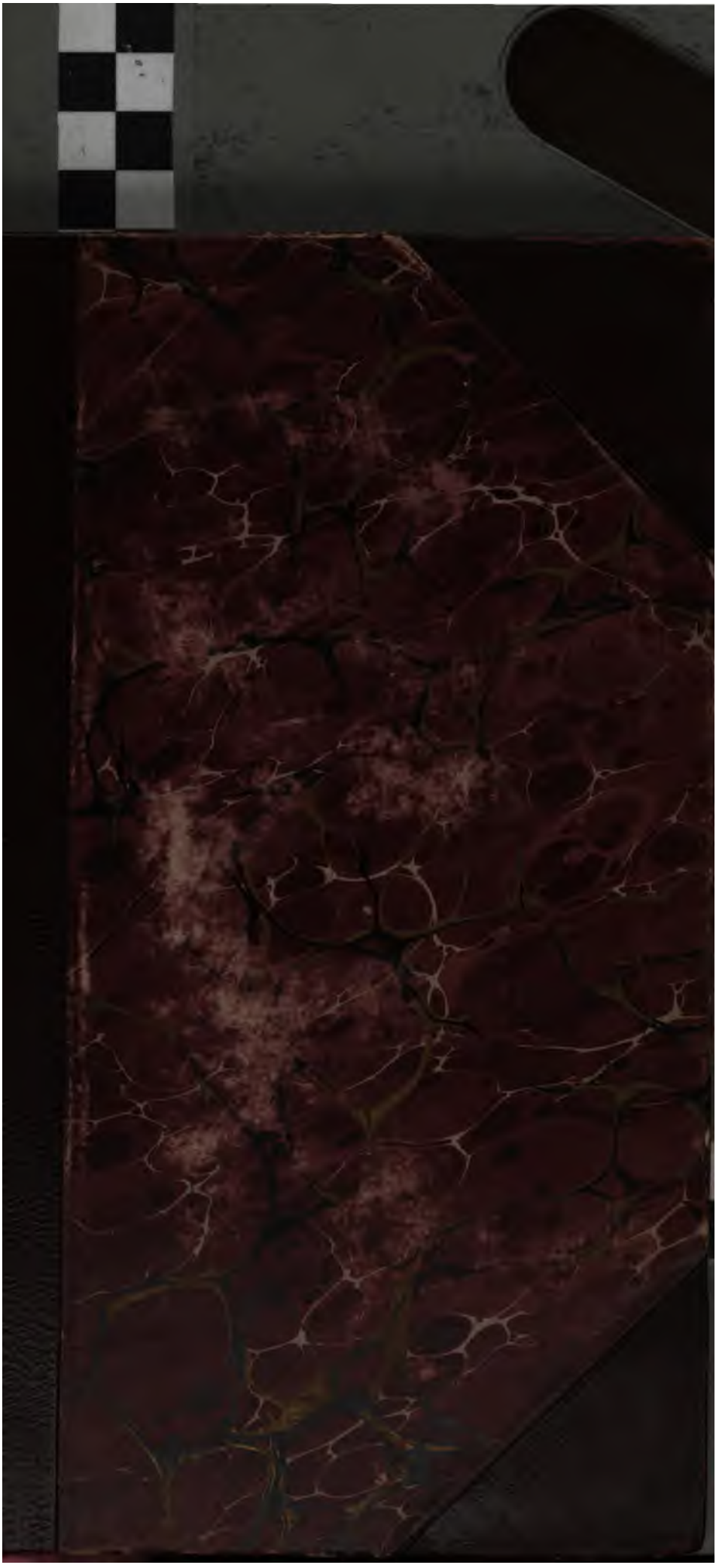

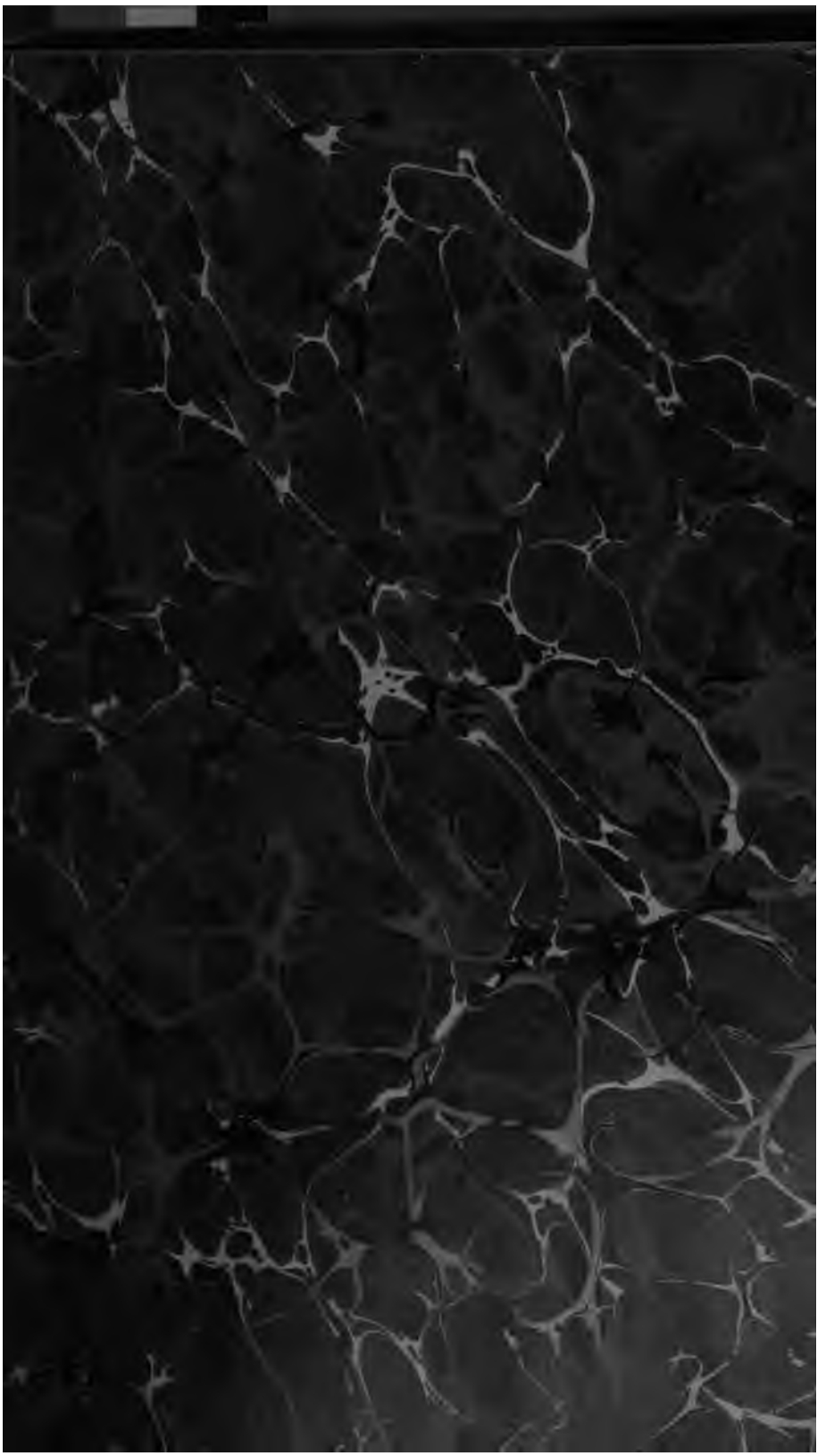

LORD BYRON.

LIFE AND GENIUS

OF

LORD BYRON.

BY

SIR COSMO GORDON.

Newstead Abbey.

"The Disdar, who beheld the mischief, took his pipe from his mouth, dropped a tear, and, in a supplicating tone of voice, said to Lusieri, Τέλος!—I was present."—Dr. CLARKE.

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Lord Byron is no more! That mighty genius, which hewed out for itself a path as terrible as it was new,—which arose in circumstances far from the most propitious,—which tumbled critics of all schools and all creeds in the dust, and made their most deadly rancour alike the butt of its ridicule and the basis of its power,—which took the understandings and the applauses of men, against the most vehement resistance, and yet apparently without an effort upon its part,—has ceased to be a creating energy, and exists only in the majestic and indestructible fabrics of its own raising. The death of such a man produces feelings and suggests reflections, not produced nor suggested by that of any other man; and though Byron had lived to the very extreme bourne of human life,—though his ardour had been cooled by time, and his faculties blunted by the progress of decay, the death of Byron would still have been an event of painful contemplation. But that he has been cut off just when he had reached the full vigour of manhood—at the very point when his genius may have been presumed to become firm through experience,—when he was

applying that genius to an exposure of hypocrisy and cant the most complete and the most daring that had ever been undertaken,—and when, in addition to this, he had gone to excite by his presence, and aid with his fortune, the descendants of those who had first shown how noble a thing freedom is, and how admirable are the works of genius and fancy which it can create,—the sorrow of every admirer of the majesty of man swells to its largest extent, and the public calls aloud for every notice, however hasty or however slight, of one having such talents, turning them to such an account, and being cut off from the world at a moment so very critical.

Hence the public would willingly question the truth of the report brought by the Courier from Missolonghi; they will trace back their memories to the nineteenth day of April, eager to call to mind whether that was a day of more than ordinary gloom,—whether Nature, by some sad omen, gave signs that she was losing her own, her favourite son; and they will take up the last fragment of his works as they would a death-bed token from a dear friend, and say, with sad looks and sickening heart, "And is this the last, the very last instance in which we shall trace the wayward but wonderful hand of him, who has so often made our blood alternately boil and curdle; who has laid bare every passion of the human heart, and done more to expose and explode cant and hypocrisy than any other man of whom there is a trace upon record?" It is to satisfy in some measure this intense interest, to gratify to a certain extent the wish that the bard had been as immortal as his writings; that his body had been of the same indestructible matter as his mind, that we have

drawn up this hasty sketch;—a sketch which though it be by no means perfect, is yet made with feeling and not without knowledge of the subject.

Before proceeding to trace the pedigree and conduct of Lord Byron, and give a few touches of his character as a man and an author, we cannot refrain from spending a few minutes in the contemplation of himself; and here the first thing that strikes us is the vast power of his genius. This power appears, not so much in his works—although, between them and those of any other writer of the age the distance be not only immense but absolutely immeasurable, as in the incapability of circumstances to draw him from his favourite pursuit. Born to no immediate expectation of fortune, allowed to wander in his infant years among the mountains of the remote North, sent thence to the unobtrusive Grammar School of Aberdeen, there to toil at his lessons without distinction and without notice,—carried round the forms of that school the one morning, for the purpose of being whipped for a fault which he had not committed, and called out in the catalogue of that school the very next by the epithet of "*Dominus de Biron*,"—sent while yet a raw boy to a public school, and thence to college,—retiring at a very early age to a splendid mansion of which he was sole lord, being courted and caressed by the great, and having riches which to him must have seemed boundless,—these were temptations which almost no other young man could have withstood, and which would have certainly led most young men to confirmed foppery or vulgar dissipation. Upon Byron, however, they had no such effect: true, he did indulge, openly in those things which the most saintly of the

same rank and circumstances do in private; but there was a stamina within which ever put him in mind, that, high as was the rank to which he had been elevated, and seductive as were the temptations with which he was beset, he was more mighty as a man than as a peer, and as a poet than as a lover of pleasure. Perhaps, indeed, there never was a more complete triumph of the individual arm of gigantic intellect over the combined and unprovoked rancour of (they would be very angry if called *pigmy*) critics, than in his reply to the abuse of the Edinburgh Review. No doubt the reviewers laid themselves most wofully open, and, whether it was from some momentary hallucination, or from some individual and personal hostility which has never been explained, they never were so gratuitously severe, or so egregiously wrong. The youth of the author, the many inducements which he had to spend his time in every other manner rather than in chastising even the literary *Minoses* of the North, the rapidity with which the retort came, and the admirable skill with which it was given, all tended to prove in the most public and palpable manner, not only that the Edinburgh Reviewers were most lamentably in the wrong, but that those subsequent critics, of much renown and little truth, who have found out (haply by an analogical process) that Lord Byron was a careless student, and by consequence an ignorant man, blundered every jot as much.

An answer which he made to a fellow scholar, in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, who questioned him as to the cause of the honorary addition of "*Dominus de Biron*" to his name, served at that time, when he was only ten years of age, to point out that he would be a

man who would think, speak, and act for himself; who, whatever might be his sayings or his doings, his vices or his virtues, would not condescend to take them at second hand. This happened on the very day after he was menaced with the flogging round the school; and when the question was put to him, he replied: "It is not *my* doing. Fortune was to whip me yesterday for what another did, and she has this day made me a Lord for what another has ceased to do. I need not thank her in either case; for I have asked nothing at her hands."

Now this desire to stand alone, in his opinions as well as in his actions, appears to have grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength of the noble bard; and though perhaps not the sole cause, it is at least one cause, both of the celebrity which he attained, and the opposition, abuse, and misrepresentation with which he was assailed.

Whether at Harrow School or at Trinity College, Byron did not choose to pursue his studies in the beaten track, in which dunce follows dunce, with the same regularity as the sails of a windmill course one another in their revolution; and, therefore, those who ever judge of study only from the hours and modes in which a man appears to be studying, would have it that he did not study at all; but let any unprejudiced man look at his works, and the fact will be evident, that he was not merely a student,—but a student of the very highest class;—that while these afford every evidence of a close and correct acquaintance with mere book learning, they prove at the same time that in the study of human nature he was superior to any other man of his time; and if this was the result of a

neglect of the prescribed scholastic exercises, then, the more that these are neglected the better.

The celebrity which Byron attained depended much upon the originality of the views which he took of men and of events. No doubt, when once those views were studied, their correctness made their currency permanent, and they would not have given so much pleasure to the world generally, or created so much alarm among those whose interest it is to keep the world in the dark, had they not been as faithful in likeness as they were forcible in colouring; but still it was to their novelty and their boldness that they owed that notice which they drew at once. It has been complained of Byron that he has sketched only dark pictures of human nature; that his principal characters are fiends in human shape, who either do not exist, or ought not to be described. But in this objection lies the very quintessence of the vice which it is the main end of all Byron's writings to lash;—that disposition that exists on the part of hireling sycophants and hacknied scribblers to compound for a certain quantity of vice, provided the exerciser of that vice be possessed of a certain quantity of office;—and the independence of Lord Byron's station in society conspired with the independence of his mind, in enabling him to do that to a far greater extent than any previous writer had ventured to attempt. To carry this properly into effect; to begin and make great progress in a work at which no other man had dared to hint, it was necessary that Lord Byron should separate himself from all the small systems and wrangling parties of ordinary men. He was not a champion for kings against republics, or republics against kings;

be joined not in the Tory cry to keep in office, or in the Whig cry to get into it; he was not for the ambition of one church, the restlessness of another, or the fanaticism of a third: as little did he confine his comprehension within the narrow circumference of the would-be philosopher, who first brands all the other would-be philosophers with heresy and error, and then, pulling his own little book from his bosom, says, with matchless and self-complacent modesty, "There is but one oracle of truth in the world,—There!" Now, if Byron had declared himself as being under the banners, or even swaying the sceptre of any of those factions, literary, political, or religious, which divide the every day world, the scope of his satire must have been thereby confined, and, in spite of him, there would have been, as it were, a home preserve of vice belonging to that party in which he could neither have blown a horn or fired a shot; there would have appeared in his exposure of the vices of mankind, the same snugly veiled and shaded corner labelled "no admission here except on business," which is more or less discoverable in the works of all other satirists. But, elevated above most of the writing world in rank, and towering over it all immensely in power and in energy, he stood apart from all other writers—a giant in his natural dimensions, rendered more gigantic by the attitude and elevation in which he was seen.

There is something in this sublime and solitary elevation of genius, which at once commands the admiration, nay almost the adoration, of the unprejudiced mind. Much of this is no doubt owing to the majesty of the object, but much also is owing to its loneliness: a stream, even in a land of waters,

is an object of pleasure; but a stream in the sandy desert, is hailed with an emotion far more fond: a palace in a square of a great city may be an ornament, but how insignificant is it, compared with the same palace set on a hill-side, among wide lawns and waving woods, and swept by the pure and free blasts of heaven? a man in a valley too, especially when you look down upon him, appears dwarfed and shrunken in his dimensions; but place him above you on a cliff, and let his figure be projected against the sky — especially the warm sky of a winter twilight, and it will instantly strike you that all his dimensions exceed those of ordinary men. If this be the case from mere situation, and that it is any man may at once convince himself, what must not be the effect, when the grandeur of the attitude and the vastness of the lineaments exceed even the elevation? This is the case with Lord Byron, (we cannot bring ourselves to write, or even think of him as having left us;) and being so, it is no wonder that the superiority conceded to him even by his enemies, corresponded.

But the unity and elevation of purpose—the rising above the courses and squabbles of common men, which won for Lord Byron so exalted a name among the liberal and the unbiassed, exposed him also to a hostility more rancorous in its nature and more furious in its form than was displayed towards any other man of the age. Society in this country, as it is formed by institution and prejudice, has been said to consist of three parts, of which the only sound and wholesome one is that in the middle; and by a transposition not the most common, the scum and the

dregs have united in their hostility to Lord Byron; and in the outcry, that not only themselves but the whole frame of society and of nature would go to wreck in consequence of what he had written. The bard has, however, sung the portion of songs which had been meted out for him, and left upon Parnassus a silence the most mournful; and yet, though he has certainly exposed vice and folly in quarters where none of his predecessors ventured to expose them, the world goes on, and persons who find that their interest lies that way, sneak and sin very much after the old fashion. The outcry therefore was quite needless as respects those works of darkness which men will do rather than speak of; but that outcry was a direct confession of the vast powers of him against whom it was made; and the reason why men of so very opposite party and creeds joined in this outcry was, that the light which he shed threatened to visit themselves with a clearness and consequent power of exposure which they were ill calculated to bear. From the mighty renegade who, in some remote and despotic land, sacrificed the freedom and the happiness of millions to his ambition or his debauchery, down to the private deserter of principle, or court disciple at home, who abandoned his former principles for a little pension, or retailed hypocrisy and nonsense for a morsel of bread, none was secure from the visitation of Lord Byron; and when the bolt of his avenging was once launched, there was no changing its direction or breaking its force. Sometimes, indeed, as in the case of poor Southey the laureat, it was thought that he aimed at a rat blows sufficient to have felled an elephant; but in all such

cases the individual chastised, was chastised as the type of a class rather than as an individual; and it is extremely probable that the handling which he has given the present Southey, will save genius the pain which she must have felt if undisturbed success in him could have been held out as a future encouragement to the breed.

It has been urged against Lord Byron that he was no patriot; that he amused himself in rambling over the world, and in writing tales and dramas, while the aspirants to that proud title were sweeping and drudging in the senate-house at home. But with all due deference to those trumpeters in the army of their own virtues, real or imaginary, they must be contented to admit, that he has produced a more extended and permanent effect than them all. Their orations may be heard by some two or three hundred persons in the houses of parliament, may be reported in some dozen of newspapers, with considerable odds against being generally read; nay, they may even find their way to the counter of Hatchard or Ridgway, as it happens, thence to be apportioned to the pasty and the pie-bakers; but they pass over society like light breezes over a frozen sea, making little impression, and leaving no trace. The writings of Byron, on the other hand, are disseminated over the whole civilized world; the wave of civilization will, as it spreads, bear them as among the brightest ornaments on its van; and they will retain their place and their power until the languages in which they are expressed be altogether forgotten, or the vices and follies which they lash, be altogether banished.

It has been further objected to Lord Byron, that his

manner of life was different from that of common men; that in his vices and his virtues (when any one from an unbounded stretch of charity allowed him virtues) he was continually starting away from that path which the sober-minded have chalked out and marked out as the only one that is or can be right. Now, the sages by whom this exception is taken, are very anxious to grant indulgence to men on account of the difference of external circumstances, in which, having fathers born before them, the turnings up of the die of mere chance, or something even less meritorious on their part, may have placed them: they would not just bring the general to trial by that law which might condemn the soldier to be flogged or shot,—they would allow to a duchess a licence which would disgrace for ever the wife of a yeoman, and they would hold that to be praiseworthy in a foreign emperor, which would be pretty loudly and pretty generally spoken against in a British king; they would, in short, allow cleanness of the linen to make up for some little spots upon that which is within it, and set off a jewel upon the finger or the forehead against the want of a jewel in the heart. This is not to be quarrelled with, or, at any rate, it is not to be helped: it has been the case in all past ages of the world, and if something, of which not even a dreamer ventures to dream, at present, be not discovered, we suspect it will be the case in all future ages. Now, why will those persons who can be so very considerate and indulgent to distinctions which men make,—distinctions which, in many cases, are owing to no merit in the parties,—be nevertheless so intolerant with regard to those more imperious, more marked, and more splendid distinctions,

which are formed by nature herself? To the great ones of man's making, they are all condescension and courtesy; while to the great ones formed by man's Maker, they will not yield a single jot. It is in this that the chief unfairness of their judgment lies: Poets, at least most of those who deserve the name, have ever been exposed to this unfairness, and to none has it been more largely dealt out than to Lord Byron. It is not intended to advocate his vices, or even his follies, (for according to the common standards, poets have both, great usually in proportion to their own greatness); but ordinary distributive justice demands that the same measure which applies to a dull clerk or a prosing lecturer, should not be applied to such a man as him whom we are noticing. It is not meant to defend this waywardness of conduct; it is only meant to say, that, without it, the powerful mental displays never have been, and very likely never will be obtained.

But not only have the general conduct and character of Lord Byron been made the subject of attack; his works have been denounced both as having a tendency to corrupt the world, and as written for that express and avowed purpose. This charge is generally brought forward by those who contrive to make a living by keeping the world virtuous, and who, yet, in a manner not the most consistent, are always complaining that it gets more vicious upon their hands,—who talk as if the expending large sums of money and the employing of a greater number of hands in the propagation of sound doctrines, had no other effect than to promote infidelity and vice. When indeed they meet to raise the funds which are to print books

and pay missionaries, they tell us of the many thousand good and precious tracts which have been circulated, of the number of pious and zealous labourers who have gone abroad into the world, and the accession which has been made by field and by flood, at home and abroad, to the number of the believing and the good. All this is most consolatory; and if it were quite true, it would not only lessen the quantity of bad morals and bad faith, but, in time, diminish the expense to which the country is put in keeping these down. It passes, however, and the tale of "the lamentable spread of infidelity" rings in our ears till our pockets are largely and almost miraculously opened. Now under a system of things so incomprehensible and contradictory as this, it was not possible for one possessing the acute habits of observation, and exercising the general powers of satire of Lord Byron, but to suspect that something was wrong, and suspecting, it was but natural for him to expose it. The opposition which this raised against him was the most violent and the most unrelenting; and there was at the same time, the least show of reason in it. But if any mischief has hence arisen, that has not been caused so much by the writings of the bard, as by the previous circumstances upon which he was enabled to found his sarcastic remarks, and the injudicious way in which the remarks and the remarker were anathematized instead of being answered. Somehow or other, when the men who make their livings by any religious system or scheme are attacked, they contrive to shift the attack from themselves, not merely to the peculiarities of their scheme or system, but to religion itself,—identifying that not

only with their own personal interests, views, and frailties, but some with their very vices. Now though it may be true that the interests of religion and morality, require that the follies, failings, and vices of their accredited conservators, should not be more inquired into or exposed than those of other men, yet there is a counter-obligation upon them to be more circumspect than their fellows. It is not meant to say that they should be altogether pure, because the experience of no age or church has given evidence that they can possibly be so; and therefore any claim to impeccability would be but hypocrisy. It is but fair, however, that they should admit their weakness and be very watchful that they do not confound or contaminate that which is divine and holy in itself, with the weakness of human nature; because when they do so, they create in the minds of the ignorant,—who of course take the whole of their religious notions from the homilies and actions of its professors jointly,—suspicions against the system itself. Lord Byron may have been severe in this way; but still, if there had been nothing but the pure celestial matter of religion to which his satire could have applied, it is needless to say that that satire would have been wholly without effect. That he and others who like him have been angrily dealt with, have been met by scolding and not by reason, is a proof of fears on the part of the other side, and the very existence of those fears is a presumption, if not a proof of faults. The discussion of this part of the subject is rather long for a sketch of the nature of the present; and at any rate it would come with more propriety and effect in treating of the nature and tendency of his writings.

In the meantime therefore a brief notice shall be given, first of those from whom he is descended, and then of the leading events of his own life.

The ancestry of Lord Byron forms a very small element in that character which he has left behind him; but as every thing relative to such a man has a certain degree of interest, especially at the present time, it may not be amiss to take a line through the family succession since the Conquest. At that time there were two powerful barons of the name—Ernest, who had extensive domains in the counties of York and Lincoln, and Ralph, whose possessions lay in Nottingham and Derby, and who was the direct ancestor of the subject of the present memoir. The two successors of Ralph were both named Hugh; they were great benefactors of the Church, and the last of them retired from the world, and led a monastic life. Roger succeeded to the second Hugh, and was in his turn succeeded by Robert, who enriched the family by marrying Cecilia, only daughter of Sir Richard Clayton of Clayton in the county of Lancaster. This happened in the reign of Henry the Second; and from that period till the time of Henry the Eighth, Clayton continued to be the family residence of the Byrons. The fortunate Sir Robert was succeeded by a son of the same name, whose two sons again were eminently distinguished for bravery in the wars carried on by Edward the First. Sir John, the elder of these warriors, became governor of the castle of York; and his son, also Sir John, distinguished himself in the wars in France under Edward the Third, by whom he was knighted at the siege of Calais.

This Sir John dying without issue, was succeeded by Sir Richard, and he again by another Sir John, who fought under Henry the Fifth, and received the honour of knighthood as a reward for his valour. His youngest son succeeded him, and was succeeded by another Sir John, who, dissatisfied at the conduct of Richard the Third, was among the first that joined Richmond upon his landing at Milford. He displayed great bravery at the decisive battle of Bosworth. His bravery was not unrewarded, for Henry bestowed upon him the offices of constable of the castle of Nottingham, and steward and warden of Sherwood Forest. Having no family, the lands descended to his brother Nicholas. It had been through barons or knights of the name of John, that the family had hitherto been chiefly enriched and ennobled; and in the reign of Henry the Eighth, another Sir John was made steward of Manchester and Rochdale, and lieutenant of the Forest of Sherwood. This Sir John was a great favourite with Henry, supporting him warmly in all his measures, and entering fully into all his views, both in his change of religion and his changes of queens. In return for this, when the lands of the church came to be divided, he was not forgotten. The church and abbey of Newstead, with the manor of Papelham, and the rectory, with the adjoining lands, were given to him. Newstead Abbey was a foundation for regular canons of the Augustine order; its situation was beautiful, and its riches considerable. Sir John, the son of this expeller of the canons, and regainer back from the church of a good deal more than his ancestors had ever bestowed

upon it, was high in favour with Elizabeth; and his son, Sir Nicholas, having gained much military skill in the wars in the Netherlands, was, if not of ultimate service to Charles, at least one of the first, firmest and boldest supporters of the royal cause, upon the breaking out of the civil war. In consideration of his services at the battle of Edge-hill, he was made governor of Chester; and he defended that city against the Parliament army for a considerable time. Sir John, son of the younger brother of this Sir Nicholas, was also a zealous royalist. He had been knighted by James at his coronation; was appointed governor of the Tower, after the Commons had denounced Colonel Lunsford; and in this situation he showed a great deal of firmness. He afterwards became an equally zealous and more fortunate partisan than his uncle Sir Nicholas. After the battle of Newbury, in which he played a very conspicuous part, he was, on the 24th of October 1643, created Baron Byron, of Rochdale, and appointed field marshal of all the king's troops in Worcester, Salop, Cheshire, and North Wales. His uncle, having been taken by the Parliament forces, he was appointed governor of Chester; and having defeated Sir Thomas Fairfax, and performed some other services of importance, he was so hated by the Parliament, that they passed a special act, exempting him from pardon, and confiscating his property. The king, however, in the meantime appointed him governor to the duke of York (afterwards James the Second), with whom he effected his escape to Holland. From Holland he passed into Flanders, with his royal pupil, and was in the army of Marshal

Turenne. He died at Paris, in 1652, without issue, and was succeeded in his titles and estates by his brother Richard. This second lord died in 1679, and was succeeded by William, the third lord. William, the fourth lord, was thrice married, but his first lady died of the small pox, soon after their marriage; and the three sons and daughters which he had by his second lady all died before him. William, his eldest son, by a third marriage, was born in 1722, and succeeded him in 1736. He had been in the navy in his younger years, and was a man of considerable influence at court: so much so as to procure the office of master of the stag hounds, in 1763; but being a man of ungovernable passions, he was, in 1765, sent to the Tower, under a charge of having killed his relation, Mr. Chaworth, in a duel, which took place under very peculiar circumstances, at the Star and Garter Tavern, in Pall-Mall. The dispute which led to this fatal catastrophe was begun and ended in the same room, and at the same meeting, Lord Byron insisting that they should instantly settle it by the sword, and with such light as one glimmering candle afforded. Being the more expert swordsman of the two, his friend and neighbour received a mortal wound, although he lived long enough to settle his own affairs, and supply such information as led the coroner's jury to return a verdict of wilful murder against his lordship. The trial, which excited an immense degree of public interest at the time, came on at Westminster Hall, before the peers. It lasted two days, and ended by an unanimous sentence of manslaughter, pronounced by upwards of two hundred and fifty members of the up-

per house. Upon being brought up for judgment, he pleaded his privilege as a peer, and was in consequence discharged. After this affair, Lord Byron was shunned by his relations, and retired to his seat, where, though he lived in a state of perfect exile from persons of his own rank, his violent temper found abundant exercise in continnal war with his neighbours, and sufficient punishment in the hatred of his tenants. In this unhappy state he lingered out a long life, doing what in him lay to ruin the paternal mansion for that other branch of the family to which he was aware that it would pass at his death, all his own children having descended before him to the grave. He died at Newstead, in 1798. John, the next brother to Lord William, and born in the year after him, that is, in 1723, was a man of a very different disposition, although his career in life was almost one succession of misfortunes. The hardships which he met with, while accompanying Commodore Anson in his expedition to the South Seas, are well known, from his own highly popular and affecting narrative; and his grandson, the poet, is supposed to have had some of the sufferings of the honourable John, afterwards commodore and admiral Byron, in his mind, when he gave some of the most exquisite touches to his admirably painted picture of the storm and shipwreck, in Don Juan. So unfortunate was he, in regard to weather, that he was known throughout the fleet by the name of "foul weather Jack," and the sailors had great reluctance to go to sea under his command. Against the enemy he had equally bad success; not that he was deficient either in bravery or in skill, but the weather was always be-

tween him and the enemy. Still he was a man who deserved and enjoyed the esteem of all about him, and was reckoned one of the best naval officers of his time.

His only son, who was born in 1751, who received an excellent education, and whose father procured for him a commission in the guards, was so dissipated that he was known by the name of "mad Jack Byron." He was one of the handsomest men of the time; but his character was so notorious, that his father was obliged to desert him, and to be but seen in his company was considered a stain. There was no dissipation, and hardly a vice except those coming immediately within the penal statutes of the country, in which he did not occasionally, or even habitually engage. In his twenty-seventh year he found means to seduce Amelia marchioness of Carmarthen, who had been but a few years married to a husband with whom she had lived in the most happy state until she formed this most unfortunate connexion. The noise which this *fatal pas* occasioned was very great, as well on account of its own enormity, as of the perfect happiness which had previously subsisted between the husband and the wife, and of the great reluctance which the husband had to believe in her guilt. That, however, was ultimately proved in a manner but too convincing; and after one fruitless attempt at reclaiming the lady, she was divorced by her husband and abandoned to her fate. That fate was both hasty and hard. The friends brought about a marriage between her and her seducer, which after the most brutal conduct on his part, and the greatest misery and the keenest re-

morse on hers, was dissolved in two years by her sinking to the grave of a broken heart. In about three years after, Captain Byron sought to patch up his broken fortunes by matrimony; and having made a conquest of Miss Gordon, an Aberdeenshire heiress, he spent her fortune in a few years, and left her and her only child, the subject of this memoir, in a destitute and defenceless state. He went to France to avoid his creditors, and died at Valenciennes in 1791, little more than three years after the birth of his son, to whom, in the meantime, was given his mother's name of Gordon.

Having thus traced the genealogy of Lord Byron, and given some account of those who preceded him in the title down to the time when it descended to himself, we now come to the more immediately interesting part of our memoir,—that which relates to the noble bard himself.

George Gordon was born on his mother's estate in Aberdeenshire, on the 22d day of January 1788; and as his mother and himself were soon afterwards deserted by his profligate and dissipated father, the whole care of his infant years devolved upon the mother; and considering the state in which she was left, it is but natural to suppose that she treated the boy with every indulgence within her power. Tenderness and indulgence in his early years were rendered the more necessary, that, besides having one of his feet deformed, he was of a very weakly constitution. For these reasons, he was not quite so early sent to school as is sometimes the case, but allowed to expand his lungs and strengthen his limbs upon the mountains of the North. This initiatory

education was evidently the best adapted for giving strength to his bodily frame; and the sequel showed that it was far from the worst for giving tone and vigour to his mind. This period of his life passed unheeded; but we find traces of its influence in many parts of his works. The grandeur of nature around him; the idea that he was upon mountains which had never been permanently trod by the foot of a conqueror; the conversation of a people whose amusements at that time consisted in a great measure of the recital of heroic exploits against invaders; feats of strength, and demonstrations of independence, mingled with all the wild goblin stories usual among such a people, and in such a place; and, above all, the being left at leisure and without dictation, to contemplate those scenes and listen to those recitals, afforded an initiatory education for Byron, far more poetical than that which he could have obtained had he been nursed at the Abbey of Newstead, and nurtured after the fashion of its lords, in the proudest times of that high spirited, but latterly wild and wayward family. It cannot be denied that the secondary part which well-brought up children, as they are termed in common parlance, are made to play in their occupations and their amusements, and even in their acquisition of knowledge, tends more to weaken their natural powers and blunt their perception and curiosity, than those indulgent parents who tell them every thing themselves, or those indolent ones, who procure hirelings to tell them every thing, seem to be aware. In infancy, there is more danger in being educated too much, than in

being educated too little; and young master or miss, who is a parrot at five, has many chances of being a parrot through life. No doubt, the book-learning of the world must be communicated by an instructor; but the feeling of the beauties of nature, and the advantages or defects of society cannot be communicated. Tutors may load the memory, but they can neither awaken the fancy nor implant the power of reflection; and hence it has, some how or other, happened, that the men whose conceptions have been the most sublime, and whose descriptions have been the most forcible, have ever been those who have taken their own way of going to work. It may be true, that this licence of his infant years, may have given to Byron some of those faults of which he has been accused, as well as many of those peculiarities which whipt and trammelled dulness, to say nothing worse, has considered as faults; but it is equally true, that to the same origin must be attributed those transcendent qualities which, now that neither hypocrite nor driveller has to fear his lash, must throw all the erewhile blamed peculiarities of his character into the shade. The sublime rock, the dark lake, the dim forest, and the dashing stream which the infant bard was allowed to contemplate, without the foolery of man's accompaniment, have in each of them a lyre strung by the hand of nature herself; and how well he found out their tones and thought of modulating their sweetness, was well proved by the event. The single poem of Loch-na-gaur, which though of course not written in infancy, is yet a recollection of infant impressions, proves

that if the author was not then coaxed and courted by some hireling tutor who was drudging for a benefice, he was much better employed.

When a few years bracing upon the mountains had removed the symptoms of weakness with which George Gordon was born, he was sent to school, and there, though still an infant, he showed that he would one day form a character for himself. A school-fellow says that he was naturally kind hearted and generous, though at the same time dignified and reserved. The class used to jeer him, as boys are often in the habit of doing, upon the natural deformity of his foot; but though it was obvious that he felt keenly upon these occasions, and had spirit sufficient to chastise, when he chose, the impertinence of boys much older and stronger than himself, his feeling toward them had more of contempt than of anger or peevishness. During play hours he was often apart, and seemed to be following trains of speculation which had no connexion either with the class or the school exercises; although, when he pleased, he entered into their sports with an ardour and a zest far surpassing any of his fellows. As a scholar, there was nothing remarkable about him, excepting that, though he sought no assistance from his teacher or his class-fellows, and seemed to derive as little from the ordinary modes and means of study, he was by no means deficient in his tasks, especially those parts of them that depended more upon perception and judgment than upon mere memory.

While George Gordon was occupied in this manner, William, the fifth Lord Byron, departed, at New-

stead Abbey, that life which had for so many years been rendered disagreeable by his own violence and want of temper. As the son of Lord William had died in the same year in which George Gordon was born, and as the descent both of the titles and the estates was to heirs male, George Gordon succeeded to the titles and estates of his grand uncle. The old Lord died on the 17th of May 1798; and thus the state and prospects of the heir were completely changed, when he was little more than ten years old. The hauteur with which he alluded to this change when first noticed by his school-fellows, has been already narrated; and his whole conduct upon the occasion showed that though he was not insensible to the advantages which wealth and rank would give him, he still set the character which he would have as a man, standing independently and for himself, in far higher estimation than the adventitious circumstances of titles and possessions.

Upon this change in his fortune, Lord Byron was removed from the immediate care of his mother, and placed as a ward under the guardianship of the Earl of Carlisle, who had married Isabella, the sister of the late Lord Byron. This grand aunt resembled the bard a little, both in her talents, and at least one or two points of her character. She wrote verses of exquisite beauty and considerable power; and after showing for many years how well she was calculated to be the first ornament of the gay and fashionable world, she left it without any apparent cause, and with perfect indifference, and in a great measure shut herself up from society. Whether the thoughts of

Lord Byron got any absolute turn towards poetry from the example of this grand aunt, and that of her son, who was also a poet, has never been positively stated, although it is by no means unlikely.

When Byron came under the guardianship of his grand uncle, it was immediately resolved upon, that he should receive the usual education which England bestows upon her titled sons: he was first sent to one of the great public schools, and from that to one of the universities. Harrow was the school which was chosen; and in less than six months after his unexpected accession to the title, Lord Byron was placed there under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. Drury. A change of scene and of circumstances so unexpected and so rapid, would have been deemed hazardous for any boy, but it was doubly so to one of Byron's ardent mind and previous habits. One who had been taken at once from the society of those in humble life and placed among youths of his own age, the extent of whose means of gratification must to him have appeared without limit, must have been led to extravagance of action; and one who had been accustomed to the open wilds of nature, could not be expected to confine his mind to the narrow routine of school themes and measured walks among the clipt shrubs of a regular garden. The reflections which Byron subsequently made upon Harrow in particular, and upon the nature and tendency of the system of our great public schools in general, are hence the reflections of what may be termed a spectator from another country; and, therefore, they ought to be received with very careful attention. No doubt something

must be discounted for the feelings of a mind so intensely ardent, and the anxiety to hurry on to manhood in order to enjoy a fortune which was as ample as it was unexpected; but still the animadversions which Byron makes upon the system of those schools demand another sort of explanation than the anger into which they have worked the doctors. That anger may indeed be held as the grand test of their accuracy; just as the anger of others is to be held as evidence of the truth of what he has said against other men, and other systems; and that they are nothing more than the vivid picture of the actual impressions made upon his mind, at an age when it would be absurd to suppose that he had become a convert to any improper doctrine, is proved by the fact, that, while he condemns the system, he speaks of his tutor in terms of the sincerest affection. Now if he had praised the tuition and blamed the tutor, it would have been at least presumptive evidence that he was actuated by prejudice or by rancour; but as man is ever the object of our angry passions, it follows that Byron was an honest observer and describer, and that he was not a true one, the doctors themselves have never attempted to demonstrate. No doubt they have attacked him with that weapon which they ever wield against each other, and have set forth a very large portion of bad English in order to prove not only that many years should be occupied in the study of dead languages, and exploded systems of mythology, but that their own way of going about those matters is out of all question the best. Now without inquiry into how far they may have made out either of

those positions, which, upon their own showing, remains still very much a matter of faith; the only thing which they have proved clearly, and to all the world, is, that a man may have a great deal both of the theory and the practice of classical lore, and yet be a very lame reasoner, and a very lumbering writer. But leaving the doctors to enjoy their capon and "mend their cacalogy," the reader will be better pleased to trace the steps of the noble bard.

During the six years that Byron remained at Harrow, his poetical powers began to develop themselves a little; and though there was nothing superlatively fine or precocious in those flappings and flutterings, as it were, of the infant wings of genius, there was in them far more of force, fire, and originality, than is found in the usual verses of school-boys. As he advanced in youth too, that ardour of passion, and that keenness, intensity, and accuracy of feeling, which marked the whole of his brilliant but brief career, and which, prejudice apart, delight every body so much in his writings, began to develop themselves. Boys of ardent passions, and who have at the same time the means of gratifying those passions, are under no circumstances over and above regular; and the situation in which they are perhaps least so is a public school, where numbers of their fellows of the same unthinking age, having the same means, and possessing nearly the same habits, are perpetually goading them on. The enemies of Byron have never ventured to hint that he was in his boyhood more wild than his fellows; all that they ever have laid to his charge is, that in his freaks there was a little more

originality; and if this be a stain, it is one which his memory can well bear.

From Harrow he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge; and as he was now considerably older than when he had taken his own way of studying his lessons in Scotland, he seems again to have given offence to the more intolerant part of the doctors, by selecting his own courses of study, as well as his own modes of pursuing them. Those established formulæ of drudging, which lead us regularly, when the number of steps have been taken, to academic honours, as the progress of an algebraic equation leads to the final result, had no attraction for him. The poets were his favourites, and with equal merit, those which brought their descriptions nearest to his own times had the preference. When, however, it suited his purpose, he showed that he had a far more vivid perception of the real, the spiritual and immortal beauties of classic lore, as well as far more intense and congenial feelings toward the people to whom the world is first and chiefly indebted for that lore, than those who can find music in every syllable, and song in every concatenation of sounds; and who are so intent upon the body of this being of delight, that the spirit but too frequently escapes their notice.

By this time his observation of the errors and absurdities of many of the usual systems pursued by men, and the inefficiency of the common means adopted for their removal, induced him to turn satirist; and the bolt of his first effort fell upon the deans and doctors of Cambridge with a severity and a truth, which there is too much reason to believe has obtain-

ed for him their implacable enmity, and still continues to make them groan in anguish and growl for revenge.

When about nineteen years of age, Lord Byron bade adieu to the deans and doctors of the Cam, and took up his residence at the family seat, where, among other and different pursuits, he arranged and had printed at Newark, a small collection of his poems, under the whimsical title of "Hours of Idleness." The apology urged for the appearance of this little volume, was the usual one of the "advice of friends;" and though it has never been stated who those friends were, it is probable that his noble, and as himself says, volunteer guardian was one of them, as the publication is dedicated to him; a circumstance which the noble bard seems afterwards to have regretted. This volume is, as has been said, not very remarkable for its power; but still, although he had published nothing more, it would have ranked him in the catalogue, and high in the catalogue of those lost literati, who would have been men of genius had it not been for the weight of the coronet. Unpretending however, as was this little volume, and obscure as was the press from which it issued, it appears to have been in a great measure the means of letting his lordship know the vast extent of his powers, and prompting him to the profitable and vigorous use of them, at so early a period of his life. This was effected too, in a way which would have for ever silenced one of a less daring and undaunted mind.

The Edinburgh Review, then in all the life and greenness of youth, and evincing none of those

symptoms of mutability, dotage, and decay which it was afterwards destined to exhibit, had, by one of the most bold and daring evolutions which ever was played off on the literary world, taken the top seat upon the bench of criticism by storm, and was condemning by wholesale; while authors of all classes and all descriptions, except the chosen few who composed or were known to its coterie, carried their wares to market with fear and trembling. This Review, which had generally been more anxious to find a victim which it could immolate, than an idol whom it could worship, pounced upon the little volume of the minor Lord, with a fury almost unknown, or at any rate seldom evinced even by itself. Genius, learning, spirit, every thing good, was denied him, and the fact of his having ventured to set forth a book, in however humble and unpretending a manner, was held up as the very acme of impudence and effrontery. The critic had his day; and the worshippers at the counter of Messrs. Archibald Constable and Company, were chuckling and saying to each other, "Well, we have done for this same George Gordon, Lord Byron, a minor. He won't tell us any thing more about his 'Hours of Idleness.' We have given him work for twelve months at the least, in repenting of what he has already done." Such were the exultations, as stated by one who heard them at the time; but they were not without an admixture of fear. They had succeeded in convincing at least themselves that Lord Byron had no talent and no taste for poetry; but if they had heard of him at all, they must have heard that he was a youth of great

spirit; and hence, though they might reckon themselves quite safe from the racing of Pegasus, there might still be some danger of that which drives forward his wingless namesake upon earth: they were not over fond of the whip; and though one of their number had recently come scratch-free out of a duel, in consequence of a stipulated charging with paper bullets, it was by no means clear that Byron, gratuitously and wantonly as he had been attacked, would be so tender of the critical flesh.

But the bard took his own way of avenging himself, and in vindicating himself, inflicted more heavy and humiliating chastisement upon the critics than if he had horsewhipped them all, or shot half their number. That pen, with which he had been but dallying in his "Hours of Idleness," he sharpened for business to its keenest point; and in brief space appeared "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," in which by the power and polish of his verses, he not only established his own claim to all those excellences of which the critics had noted him destitute; but covered them with ridicule and confusion which they have never been able to shake off. Nor was this all; for amid the chastisement of his unprovoked personal enemies, there was formed a general attack upon the faults and a general scorn of the meannesses of human nature, which would have done credit to a writer of matured experience and confirmed reputation. It is true, that in this satire he attacked some whom he afterwards found did not deserve it; but it is equally true that he attacked more upon whom it was well bestowed, both at the time and since; and there is not, in the

whole annals of satirical writing, any instance of a satire written by so young a man, which is so perfect in its form and so correct in its application.

Lord Byron, so far from making any boast of this great and happy effort, afterwards suppressed it; and up to the time of majority he continued to prosecute his fancies alternately at Newstead and in the Metropolis. At the former place he spent much of his time alone, or at least in the society, or rather under the care of a great Newfoundland dog, to which he paid great attention while alive, and raised a monument when dead. The story of the skull which, about this time, he had mounted as a drinking cup, is well-known and has been cited by the suffering enemies of the bard as a proof of early misanthropy. But real misanthropy consists in bad deeds done to the living, and not in fitting up skulls and framing inscriptions; and the man who says that he loves a dog better than he loves a human being, has seldom been known to refuse an act of kindness to the latter. A man of songs, is, especially in the ardour of youth, a man of loves, and Byron was not the man to be behind his neighbours in this way; but though he had his flames in abundance, and showed them off, through that course of amatory verse, which most, if not all, poets have to encounter, his inroads upon the peace of families have never been told. It is true that one lady, and she too a married lady, wrote several copies of cooing verses and a novel, not by any means of the purest description, scolding because he would not meet with that ardour which she wished, advances which appear to have been originally

and chiefly, if not wholly upon her part. During the whole of this period of his life,—a period which, under his circumstances, was exposed to peculiar dangers and temptations,—there is nothing which appears to bring him out from the usual character of young noblemen, unless it be higher mental endowments, and a more dignified use of them; and much as he has been blamed by wholesale and in the abstract, none of his calumniators (for in the absence of individual proofs of what they say, that must be their name,) have been able to adduce the requisite tale of well authenticated particulars. Many instances of kindness and generosity on the part of Byron are known, and could be recorded, were they at all necessary for the establishing of his character; but as he never was obtrusive with the tale of his good deeds when in life, it would be a most gratuitous attempt to patch that which needs no patching, to revert to them now that he lives only in his writings, and in the remembrance of those who never, for one moment, doubted his worth. If, at this period of his history, or indeed at any period of it, Lord Byron could have deigned to join any party, or take up the opinions of any coterie, he would at once have been lauded as its proudest boast and its greatest ornament; but Lord Byron lived and meditated for more countries than one, and for more ages than the present. Had he at any time promised to spare the sins of other men, the guardians of the public morals would have willingly given him any license to increase his own; but he was resolved to expose the cant and imposition with which he every where met, and like every other man

who has attempted this, a clamour, intolerant in proportion as it was without just foundation, was every where raised against him, not only by those who were already wincing under the exposure, but also by those who dreaded that their own turn might be the next.

When the term of his minority had expired, he resolved to improve his knowledge of the earth and of mankind, by travelling abroad; and as the state of the middle and western parts of Europe was such that he could not conscientiously examine them, and as the information which these countries were calculated to afford, was not exactly that which suited the high and poetic turn of his mind, his thoughts were directed to the classic land of the east, to that land and that people, which, to the shame of christian states, amid all their missions of peace and crusades of war, had been allowed to remain under the usurped and grinding dominion of the slaves of Mahomet. Selecting as his companion, John Cam Hobhouse, Esquire, whose love of liberty and literature seemed somewhat congenial with his own, although their powers were of a very different order, he sailed from Falmouth for Lisbon, and having landed there, he first examined all that was worthy of remark in that neighbourhood, and then proceeded, by the southern provinces of Spain, for the Mediterranean, where he landed first on the wild mountains of Albania, whose bold scenery and bolder inhabitants appear to have made a deep and permanent impression upon his mind. Having traversed the classic land of Greece, in almost every direction, and studied its scenery, with the eye of a poet and a painter, and its people with the head

of a sage and the heart of a patriot,—a patriot of a more noble kind than those breakers of public room or senatorial repose, who yelp like curs till once they get their bone, and then sneak away into a corner, where they can gnaw it in silence and secrecy,—he returned to England, better furnished in all the substantial fruits of travelling than perhaps any other man who ever returned to the shores of the same or of any other country.

Fools who knew not Byron, and knaves who had no wish that he should be known, have been at some pains to prevent the world from knowing him,—have been labouring to circulate an impression that, previous to his leaving England, he was soured by disappointment, and sick of the human race; but no calumny was ever more utterly without foundation: for, apart from the personal knowledge of every one who had access to him—and when there was any valid reason for it, that access was far from difficult, and apart too from the glowing and glorious descriptions which he is ever and anon giving of nature, there is enough in those works to show that man was the chief object of his study, and the improvement of the condition of man his fondest wish. Some men go abroad to study ruins, others to see fashions, a third class to know something about languages, a fourth to have an apology for becoming authors, and a fifth that they may be enabled to say they have not been always at home; but Byron's thirst for knowledge, and his zeal and success in the acquisition of it were universal. No man had every scene of the countries over which he passed, and the history of every action of which it had been the

theatre, so completely and so forcibly in his mind; no man made, in so short a time, so rapid and so accurate progress in the acquisition of so many and so varied languages; and no man knew so well, or described so truly the national differences in costume, in form, in manners, in government, or in happiness and enjoyment. Throughout the poems of Lord Byron, and in the notes which are appended to those poems, there are more materials for an accurate account of the state of the countries which he visited, at the time when he visited them, than are to be found in some cart loads of books expressly upon the subject. Prejudice alone can ascribe to him, as the cause of his having travelled, the fact of being weary of society at home, and folly only can imagine that he went from one place to another, either because he was tired of the people, or because the people were tired of him. At home or abroad, wherever he went, his society was courted by all who were able to appreciate his merits; and it was this general power—we had almost said general habit, of pleasing and being pleased, that stirred up against him the hostility of those whom his brilliant endowments, and his cheerful and fascinating manners, cast completely into the shade.

Instead of being, as was vulgarly supposed, a misanthrope, and one who was harsh and cruel, in either his actions or his words, he was remarkable for the delicacy with which he repressed even impertinence. This faculty may be illustrated by the following anecdote:—

A gentleman of the sister kingdom, one of those industrious persons who can engage to do any thing,

and who let nothing escape them for the want of seeking, heard that Lord Byron was about to set out for the continent, and upon receiving this intelligence, it instantly flashed upon the mind of this universal undertaker, that it would be a good raising of the wind to procure the situation of private secretary to his Lordship. Upon this he made himself as spruce and as interesting as possible; and off he set for the Albany, the place where Lord Byron then lodged. His Lordship was at the door, in the act of stepping into his curricle, when he was arrested by the candidate for the private secretaryship. He began by a long dissertation on his own powers; proceeded to an equally long topography of the route which it might be the most eligible to pursue: and ended by an inquiry as to the time at which they would set out. "My dear Sir," said Byron, with much naivète, "we set out this instant; but you see that I cannot accommodate you,—there are but two seats in the curricle, and my servant, the rogue, has got into one of them already."

Soon after his Lordship's return from the Continent, the first and second cantos of Childe Harold made their appearance; and never did poetic work excite greater astonishment, or receive more universal attention or more general praise. The Edinburgh Reviewers, finding that their own consciences were in unison with the common feeling, forgot the mud in which they had been rolled, and hastened to pay their tribute to the giant intellect which this poem evinced, considering that it was the work of one whom the doctors had set down as being idle and dissipated,

and who, when composing it, had not completed his twenty-third year. What conspired to hurry them on to this was, perhaps, the mixed sensation of fear and hope,—fear lest the lash should be again made to whistle round their heads, and hope that a man of so much power, and of principles so far exceeding their own both in grasp and in liberality, would, if taken cautiously and in time, stop at the half-way house of their politics and lend his aid to their cause, which even then had, from various circumstances, begun not to be just so popular as when they commenced their labours. Byron, however, kept his opinions and his promises to himself; and while the public were clamorous for repeated editions of Harold, he was busy in the composition of other works.

From the time of Harold's making its appearance, Lord Byron was, by universal consent, and without so much as an effort or even a wish upon his own part, considered as the first poet of the age, not only in his own country, but in the world. Fastidious persons, indeed, showed some alarm at the boldness of some of his doctrines, and many who believed in secret, cried shame at the publication of that which, though they felt it to be true in itself, they did not like to see proclaimed to the world.

These matters, however, gave himself little concern; and he continued to enjoy his time and the society of those persons of feelings and sentiments the most nearly allied to his own, which his fame drew around him and his manners retained. During this period, many were the persons of talent who profited by his bounty; but few of those acts of kindness were ever

chronicled to the world; as, to boast of what Lord Byron had done for you, was tantamount to a dismissal from his favour. There is, however, one case which has been already published, and which there can therefore be no harm in repeating. A young lady of considerable talents, but who had never been able to succeed in turning them to any profitable account, was reduced to great pecuniary hardships through the misfortunes of her family. The only persons from whom she could have hoped for relief were abroad; and so, urged on, more by the sufferings of those whom she held dear than by her own, she summoned up resolution to wait upon Lord Byron, at his apartments in the Albany, and ask his subscription to a volume of poems. She had no previous knowledge of him, but from his works; those works which have induced so many others, equally ignorant, to proclaim him a misanthrope and a monster; but from the boldness and feeling expressed in these, she concluded that he must be a man of kind heart and amiable disposition. Experience did not disappoint her; and though she entered the apartment with faultering steps and a palpitating heart, she soon found courage to state her request, which she did in the most simple and delicate manner. He heard it with the most marked attention, and the keenest sympathy; and when she had completed, he, as if to avert her thoughts from a subject which could not but be painful to her, began to converse in words so fascinating, and tones so gentle, that she hardly perceived that he had been writing, until he put a folded slip of paper into her hand, saying that that was his subscrip-

tion, and he most heartily wished her success; "but," added he, "we are both young and the world is very censorious; and so, if I were to take any active part in the promoting of your subscription, I fear it would do you harm rather than good." The young lady, overpowered by the prudence and the delicacy of his conduct, took her leave, and, upon opening in the street the paper, which, in her agitation, she had not previously looked at, she found it was a draught upon his banker for fifty pounds.

Another instance, which happened about the same time, is, though it did not require the same delicacy, equally characteristic. A young man from a distant part of the country, who had quarrelled with his father, in consequence of having squandered a small sum of money, was friendless, and almost pennyless, in the metropolis; and at last wrote a little poem, or rather a succession of bad rhymes, which he offered to the booksellers. Most of them rejected the proffered poem with scorn; but at last the writer met with one who said that, if ten pounds were given him, he would publish it, and give the writer half the profits. Elated with this, he sallied into the streets, and had wandered as far as Piccadilly, ere he knew what he was about or whither he was going. Exhausted at last, he stood still at the front entrance of the Albany, with his manuscript in his hand. Byron happened to pass; and his notice being drawn by something peculiar in the young man's appearance, he accosted him. The whole story came out; and the rustic rhymester was taken into the apartment of the bard. "And so you say you have quarrelled with your father?" said Byron.

"Yes," said the young man, hanging down his head. "And you could get a chance of half the profits of your poem for ten pounds?" "Yes," said the young man again, raising himself up. "And for how much could you be reconciled to your father?" said Byron again. "For ten pounds, also," said the young man. "Then," said Byron, "there is ten pounds, give it to him, and let him publish the poem if he pleases; and there are other five for yourself, to hasten you on your way." The young man was astonished; and before he could turn round to thank his benefactor, that benefactor had disappeared.

The keen and scrutinizing glance which Lord Byron had, during his travels, cast upon the scenery and manners of the East, and the deep impression which these had made upon him, were not confined to those touches of exquisite painting, of indignant anger, of unutterable despair, and of shadowy and almost viewless hope, which burst forth in the novel and terrible strains of Childe Harold; for they soon took a more complete body and a form more perfectly oriental, in the tales and fragments of tales which now followed each other, varied in their style, but rapid in their succession, and having a sort of family likeness in the daring of their sentiments and the dreadful fire of their colouring. Of those four poems,—they may be called small poems, but in as far as the essence and soul of poetry are concerned no one will dare to call them minor poems,—the most remarkable quality is the vast creative power which they display: not one of them, if done into prose, would make a couple of readable pages, and yet there is not one of them but

contains more genuine poetry, more images which lodge upon the memory in spite of it, and will not quit for any warning, than all that Scott has sung or Southey sounded. The daring positions—as rapid and as vast as the darting of lightning from cloud to cloud, or the starting of meteor from sky to sky, which hurry one from the sweetness of affection to the harshness of cruelty, and from the height of tenderness to the depth of crime; the barbarous and cold-blooded deeds of the oppressor; the dark and secret workings of revenge in the oppressed, with the fearful form which that takes when desperation and opportunity give it utterance; and, above all, the exquisitely affecting sketches of the clay cold form of that Greece which was animated by the soul and warmed by the life blood of freedom, while man and while liberty were yet fresh and young, have a volume and a power of poetry in them nowhere else to be found in ten times the same compass. In each of those four poems, the noble bard chose a different structure and modulation of verse; each differing from that in Childe Harold; but he proved himself equally a master and at home in them all. Lara, the last of these four poems, was not indeed acknowledged by the author, either upon its publication or for some time after; but whether the reason of this may have been the declaration given in the dedication of the Corsair, that he was to publish no more for several years, it is not worth while to inquire. Lara, however, may be regarded as a continuation of the Corsair; and as the "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte," which appeared about this time, is wholly un-

like Byron's other works, and as wholly unworthy of his genius, it must be presumed to be the production of that momentary hallucination which bachelors say falls more or less upon every man when he is courting a wife: it may be regarded as belonging to that class of abortive attempts which, under any other circumstance, would have gone the shortest road to the fire.

On the second day of January 1815, Lord Byron was married to the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbank Noel, Bart., in the county of Durham; but this marriage, though it will bring a very considerable addition of fortune to the orphan daughter of the bard,

"Ada, sole daughter of his house and heart,"

brought no substantial or permanent happiness to the bard himself. To be united to such a man as Lord Byron was no doubt a proud distinction for any lady; but it was a distinction which involved its perils. His heart was one which was well worth the winning, and one which might have been won and kept too; but the event showed that the heiress and only daughter of Sir Ralph, either had not powers equal for the task, or did not apply them in the proper manner. The cause of the dispute and separation has never been fully explained, and the less that it is inquired into the better, now that death has interposed his bar to reconciliation; but if anguish of feeling, and depth of power in the expression of it, be any proofs of the strength or the sincerity of affection, it must be admitted that, whatever may have been his faults or his indiscretions, the affection, even after the rupture, appears to have been strongest on the part of his Lord-

ship. The public, indeed, who are never the worst judges, or the most indulgent to the party most in error, rather took part against the lady at the time,—inasmuch as they hooted the baronet whenever they found him in the streets; but even upon their showing it would be wrong to decide such a question. If Lady Byron thought the habits of her husband bad, and it does not appear that they altered for the worse during the time that he remained with her, then the original fault lay in her consenting to marry him. This is a case which deserves to be put, and put strongly; for if a lady knows that the habits of a man are such as she cannot approve, or even tolerate, and if she will nevertheless marry him, then she, at least in part, brings upon herself whatever consequences may ensue. This however is not said so much in justification of any impropriety of which Lord Byron may have been guilty, as in condemnation of the want of judgment in her who could allow vanity to draw her into a situation, and yet not abide the issue with common temper, to say nothing of rational forbearance, and christian endeavours at effecting amendment. Before Lord Byron paid his addresses to this Lady (if indeed the addresses were wholly upon his side, which there is every reason to believe they were), he was generally accused of being a man of many loves,—though, as has been said, not loves of that dark and diabolical character which are the overflowings of a heart, that either never had or has wholly lost every good feeling; and this matter, and indeed every matter respecting his Lordship, had from the celebrity which his talents had procured for him,

been brought so often and so fully before the public, that to have been wholly ignorant of them, the heiress of Sir Ralph Milbank Noel, would have required to have been as completely secluded from the world as if she had been immured in a convent. As this was not the case, and as spinsters are not authorized in law to hold themselves ignorant of the import of any matters, excepting equivocal jokes at their father's table, and attentions which have not taken the precise shape of popping the question, the world has a right to assume, and it will assume, that the future Lady Byron knew the secret history of her future Lord, as well as any blue stocking gossip in town; and seeing that she was a little more deeply interested, even a good deal better. Assuming this, the world will be warranted in further assuming, either that Lady Byron hoped to reclaim those irregularities which common fame had imputed to his Lordship, or that she saw in the man himself, or in his rank and estates, something which to her seemed an adequate compensation. If she take the alternative of her powers of reclaiming, the world will be apt to say she did not give sufficient trial: if she take the other alternative, the sympathy she will meet with will be still less. Those who admire, and there are none who know or can appreciate who will not admire, the mighty spirit which this unfortunate union and unexplained separation may, indeed must, have hastened on to quit its tenement of clay,—leaving a greater blank in the intellectual and moral world, than if any other dozen of names had been struck out of it,—will continue to think after the manner which is here ex-

pressed; and therefore the expression is not only safe but salutary: It cannot indeed restore to the world that which is lost; it cannot bring back alive and warm to England that heart which lies buried and cold in Greece; but it may prevent loss and spare sorrow among those who are yet to be born.

The verses which Lord Byron wrote upon this occasion were well known and generally remembered; his 'Farewell' to those whom he still loved, being one of the most tender, and his strictures upon her whom he considered at least a principal cause of the separation, were amongst the most severe that ever have been given to the world. The interest of these was, however, temporary; and the noble bard, ejected, as it were, from scenes which once had promised him the sweets of domestic peace, appeared again upon the wide world an accomplished candidate for more extended and imperishable renown. He left England; traversed the battle scene of Waterloo ere the bones of all the warriors who had fallen in that dreadful field were hidden in the earth, or deprived of their freshness and their sap. He ascended by the bank of the Rhine, contemplated the majesty of the Alps, and the beauty of the lake of Geneva; and soon after, the third canto of the pilgrimage of Harold made its appearance. This was one of the most splendid of his works, and one in which the superiority of his genius over that of every other writer of the time, triumphed in great and unapproachable splendour. Countless had been the efforts of the pen and the pencil, which, for glory or for gain, had made that

Golgotha of brave men, the theme and the subject of their efforts. Scott himself had produced a book which nobody could read; and the sketch books of artists had been filled with sketches at which nobody would look. Hence, even the friends of Lord Byron trembled for his fame, when he approached a locality which had been so fatal to many; but the bard raised a proud triumphal arch over the fallen bodies of his contemporaries; and was surpassed in his description of that memorable battle, only by the sublime descriptions of nature which follow in the same canto of the wanderings of the Childe.

About this time, he had, besides some minor pieces, favoured the world with the 'Prisoner of Chillon,' 'Manfred,' and the 'Lament of Tasso.' Soon afterwards he fixed his residence in Italy, and completed the pilgrimage of the Childe, in a poem of the most tender feeling, and the most exquisite taste. Under the genial sky of Italy, his mind became a little playful, and he published in a new and lighter stanza, the beautiful tale of Beppo, and the more wild and romantic one of Mazeppa. Here too, he planned that, which, had he lived to complete it, must have been considered as the most daring and the most wonderful of all his works—Don Juan. This was at first published under circumstances of great alarm on the part of his bookseller, who, though in a great measure created by his genius, had been enabled to rely upon other and far more different aids. The Don was advertised in a most singular manner; and though it was sold by Mr. Murray's agents all over the country, it was not acknowledged by him, and bore only the name of the printer. This

work was general in its satire, and warm and glowing in its colouring; and though it had an obvious and important moral,—the absurdity of giving to a young man a secluded and monkish education, in the hope that that would preserve him from temptations,—it excited a great deal of clamour, especially among those upon whom, in the execution of it, the hand of the poet had been heavy. The Don was the most singular and the most original poem that had perhaps ever appeared. It was made up of the most cutting and searching satires, mixed with dissections of the human heart, and delineations of human passion and frailty which were drawn both to and with the life, and therefore threw all those who dreaded exposure into the most serious alarm. There was much more both of politics and of personality in this poem than in any of his former ones, and upon this account, the outcry against it was more loud and general. The stuff of immortality was, however, in the poem, and not a few of those who were offended at its appearance will probably find (if indeed they shall live as long) their only memorials in it, after all which, good or bad, they have done for themselves, shall be forgotten.

Alternately with Don Juan, a new species of writing, or at least one which was new to his lordship, made its appearance, in the shape of a considerable number of dramatic poems and "mysteries"—that is, sacred dramas. These, with a continuation of Don Juan, as far as sixteen cantos, and sundry communications to "the Liberal," a work begun by Byron and some literary friends of reputation, whom he had formed into a society in Italy, were the last

poetical works of this illustrious bard. Either because the spirit of the times had put an end to the love of violent political writing, or because the pure gold of Byron was mixed with too much of the miry clay of inferior men, the Liberal did not succeed to such an extent as had been anticipated; and when it had been for some time given up, the attention of his Lordship was directed into a new, and perhaps more glorious channel than ever,—a desire to lend the whole influence of his gigantic powers to the freeing of the struggling Greeks from the ignominy and thraldom of the Paynim bondages. Greece had been dear to him from the first moment that he had landed upon her shores, seen her beauty and felt her degradation; and the spirit which induced him to embark in her cause, was perhaps the most noble and the most interesting in the age; and from his own energy and the esteem in which he was held by the leading patriots among the Greeks, there is little doubt that, had his life been preserved, his fame as a hero of the most pure and independent kind, would have stood as high in the estimation of the present and of future ages, as his fame as a poet; but it seemed that in the mighty name which he had acquired in the latter capacity, his destiny was complete; and lest any one man should overtop all the world in two of the most admirable and admired attributes of human intellect and exertion, he was cut off in the prime of life, and at the very commencement of his heroic career.

The circumstances which induced him to embark in the Greek cause, it would be idle to investigate; the advantages which they would have derived from

his aid, it would be in vain to guess; those who knew his heart can easily estimate the former; and the sorrow of those to whom he is thus prematurely lost, is the best commentary upon the latter. That the Greeks had need of some one who could heal the jealousies and misunderstandings which existed among themselves, is proved by a circumstance which took place with reference to one of the followers of Lord Byron. It is this: the friends of the Greeks had, early in January 1824, established a small arsenal and laboratory at Missolonghi: to this a Suliote captain, with his followers, had been refused admission, and the mountain savage, enraged at this interruption, drew his pistol and shot the commandant, a Prussian officer in the service of Lord Byron, upon the spot; the affray was continued, and some other persons lost their lives. Byron was so affected by this ungrateful cruelty, that he was seized with an epileptic fit, which excited much alarm, but from which he recovered. This circumstance is mentioned, not so much to show the barbarous and vindictive character of the Suliotes, a fact which is but too well known, as to add another proof of how keenly Byron could feel. The whole tenor of his life, proved, indeed, that, instead of being that misanthrope and monster which his enemies would gladly have made the world believe, he was one of the most kind, warm-hearted and sensitive of men. To this, certainly, in conjunction with the greatness of his mental powers, he owed that warm and unshaken attachment with which he was regarded by all his friends; and to this, also, in a great measure, he owed that persecution and abuse which were so unsparingly bestowed upon him by his enemies;

but which, in the kindness, and happy and cheerful construction of his mind, he was very ready to forget and forgive.

Lord Byron, while entering with much ardour, and with well organized assistance, into the service of his favourite people, then engaged in a struggle for liberty, to which every well constituted mind wished success, was seized with a rheumatic fever at Missolonghi, (a place where he had once before been seriously indisposed) on the ninth day of April 1824, and after ten days of severe indisposition, he yielded to the universal lot of man, upon the 19th day of the same month, to the unspeakable grief of his friends, both old and new, and the irreparable loss of the literary world. No man could have been more lamented than he was by the leading men among the Greek patriots; and the death of no individual could have caused such a sensation in his own country. When the sad tidings arrived, it was circulated from man to man in whispers barely audible; and upon the following day, so great was the avidity to take a fresh glance at the writings of that transcendant genius, who was never more to astonish them by his boldness and sublimity, melt them with his tenderness, please them by his wit, or delight them with his beauty, that, by mid-day, scarcely a volume of his works could be borrowed in any of the libraries.

Such a demonstration of affection and respect was as it should have been. Though Byron,—amid all the vicissitudes of his lot, and under all the obloquy of those who envied or who trembled under the inflictions of his genius, enjoyed a cheerfulness of temper and exercised a kindness of heart, of which those traducers

could form no conception,—having experienced nothing of the kind themselves,—he had yet, during the greater part of his life, lived more for the public than for himself. The words of his counsel and the hand of his assistance were never backward to those who deserved them; and though those who felt or feared they had an interest in concealing what he exposed with so much truth and force, his writings have been and will be productive of much public good. They are graven upon that perennial monument which power cannot overthrow and time cannot efface. A period must arrive, when all the small squabbles of the times in which he had lived shall have been forgotten,—when the waters of oblivion shall have passed over all the minor men, high and low, whom he has mentioned; and when men of other stations, but having the same names of those who, during the few brief years that he lived, thought that to expose them was to sap the foundations of all good, shall find in the imperishable record which he has prepared, the only memorial of their ancestors.

Little men, who crept into their holes lest the lightning of his eye should glance upon and wither them, may for a time crawl out, and attempt to defile his monument, after he is no more, in the same manner that they attempted to destroy his peace and blast his reputation when he lived: but now as then, Byron is the keeper of his own fame; and the same immortality of genius which defied them while it flourished and increased among them, will continue its integrity and its defiance during that long period in which it will know no decay.

Although Byron has been cut off in the midst of

his days, and at the commencement of a new branch of his career—a branch of it, which, had it been allowed to grow to its full extent, would have caused monuments to be raised and pæans sung to his memory, wherever the light of genius dawned or the foot of freedom came; yet no man of the age has put in so strong and so successful claims to immortality; and had he lived to see Liberty enthroned anew in his beloved Greece, and Science and Song dwelling again in his adored Athena, the pleasure and the triumph would have been too exquisite and too great for mortal man. It was enough that the voice of his inspiration breathed upon the dry bones of that land of many wonders and of long slavery,—that he traversed the whole of Greece, preaching his crusade of freedom, not in the cold words of the lip, but in the warm breathings of the heart, against her barbarian lords,—and that, when his own eye closed, it closed in sight of a people among whom was his heart living and dead. The world will envy Greece in this: every one will wish that his own air had fanned the burning cheek of the bard, when his heart gave its last throb for the deliverance of man from the trammels of civil and intellectual slavery. But the envy will be in vain. Greece was the land appointed by Heaven for this high honour. Let her sons catch, keep, and exercise to its full extent, that mighty spirit which proved too vast for dwelling more than thirty-six brief years in the frame of Byron. Losing him in his bodily presence, let them keep him in their minds. Let them carry on and complete the work of their deliverance; let them build Athens anew, and people her

again with the chosen spirits of the earth; and when they have done this, let them raise upon the loftiest summit of the Acropolis, the monument of Lord Byron, bearing the chiselled likeness of a head, which found no superior among their own models, and left no equal among living men,—then they may look upon what they have effected for the human race, and inscribe the page of the record

ΤΈΛΟΣ.

APPENDIX.

Juvenile notices of Lord Byron, by a School-fellow.

Lord Byron was born in Scotland, at the estate of his mother, within thirty miles of Aberdeen; but when the desperate state of his father's affairs, which was not two years after his lordship's birth, had rendered it necessary that he should leave the country, the Hon. Mrs. Byron went to Aberdeen with her son; and as her finances were in a very low state, her style of living was the most parsimonious. Her fondness for her only son was the most exemplary and praiseworthy; and he could not go out on an evening without her enjoining him to take the greatest care of himself, adding that "she had no one for whom she lived but himself." Her means of life were very limited, and she attended no places of amusement; but she never neglected the cultivation of the mind of her infant and only son. When she came to Aberdeen, he was not above two years of age, but she watched his infancy, and when circumstances admitted, instructed him in the rudiments of the English language. She was a lady of very staid and sober habits; her face was comely, and her air that of a lady; but her stature

was diminutive, and she was too much en bon point for being accounted handsome. Notwithstanding, as her son was all to her, she was all to her son; and the attentions which the mother showed to the son were more than repaid by the fondness which the son evinced for the mother. When his years and his preparation had rendered it necessary that he should go to another seminary, he was sent to the Grammar School, where he was called in the catalogue by the name of George Byron Gordon; and if any one presumed or even attempted to transpose the two last words, he felt that as an insult of the first magnitude,—considering that those paternal friends who had done nothing for him, ought not to usurp the place of the name of that mother who had done every thing.

As soon as circumstances permitted, he was sent to the Grammar School, and there, though he did not show any symptoms of talent superior to that of his fellow students, he was among the boldest and bravest of them all. Though weak in body, he was invincible in mind; and in all sports and amusements which were of a manly nature, he took the lead among his school-fellows. Riding upon horses, fishing, sailing, swimming, and all those occupations which had something of spirit in them were congenial to his mind; and in all these he conducted himself with a dignity far surpassing what could have been expected from one of his years. Although by no means the strongest either in frame or in constitution, he was exceedihgly brave; and in the juvenile wars of the school, he generally had the victory. Upon one occa-

sion, a boy who had been attacked, rather without just cause, took refuge in his mother's house; and he interposed his authority to say that nobody should be ill used while under his roof and protection. Upon this the aggressor dared him to fight; and though the boy was by much the stronger of the two, the spirit of Byron was so determined that, after they had fought for nearly two hours, the combat had to be suspended, because both were out of breath.

The most remarkable circumstance of Byron at this time, was extreme sensibility of mind; and he was exceedingly attached to the customs of the remote place in which he was born, and deeply impressed by the legends and sayings which were common among the people.

One of his school-fellows had a little Shetland pony; and one day, the two together had got the pony to take an alternate ride, or to "ride and tie," as it was vulgarly called, along the banks of the Don. When they came to the old bridge, Byron stopped his companion, and insisted that he should dismount, while he himself rode along the bridge; "for," said he, "you remember the prophecy,

> "Brig o' Balgownie, though wight be thy wa',
> Wi' a widow's ae son, an' a mare's ae foal,
> Down thou'lt fa'.

"Now who knows but the pony may be a 'mare's ae foal;' and we are both 'widow's ae sons;' but you have a sister, and I have nobody to lament for me but my mother." The other boy consented; but as soon as young Byron had escaped the terrors of the

bridge, the other insisted upon following his example. He too rode safely across, and they concluded that the pony was not the only production of its mother.

As an instance of his sensibility, it may be mentioned that, when his name was first called out in the catalogue as "Georgius Dominus de Byron," the boys set up a shout, which the master could not suppress, and this had such an effect upon him, that it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed upon to continue at the school. His elevation seemed to give him no great pleasure; and the distance which many of his old companions felt it proper to keep from him, upon its being made generally known, gave him so much pain that he occasionally burst into tears.

At that time, though he was occasionally a moody and thoughtful boy, he was the foremost and gayest in all the more manly sports; but he was extremely kind hearted, and would not be guilty of any act of cruelty or injustice. All who knew him at that time must hold his memory in the greatest respect.

It is a proud distinction to Scotland, that she has produced the three greatest poets of the age,—Byron, Campbell, and Scott; and her sorrow that she has lost the greatest first will be corresponding.

The following is a translation of the Proclamation which, upon Byron's death, was issued by the Greek Authorities at Missolonghi, to the grief of its inha-

bitants, who were thus arrested in the celebration of their Easter festivities—

" PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF GREECE.

" The present days of festivity are converted into days of bitter lamentation for all. Lord Noel Byron departed this life to-day, about eleven o'clock in the evening, in consequence of a rheumatic inflammatory fever, which had lasted for ten days. During the time of his illness, your general anxiety evinced the profound sorrow that pervaded your hearts. All classes, without distinction of age or sex, oppressed by grief, entirely forgot the days of Easter. The death of this illustrious personage is certainly a most calamitous event for all Greece, and still more lamentable for this city, to which he was eminently partial, of which he became a citizen, and of the dangers of which he was determined personally to partake, when circumstances should require it. His munificent donations to this community are before the eyes of every one, and no one amongst us ever ceased, or ever will cease, to consider him, with the purest and most grateful sentiments, our benefactor. Until the dispositions of the National Government regarding this most calamitous event be known, by virtue of the decree of the Legislature, No. 314, of date the 15th October,

" *It is ordained,* 1. To-morrow, by sun-rise, thirty-seven minute guns shall be fired from the batteries of this town, equal to the number of years of the deceased personage. 2. All public offices, including all

Courts of Justice, shall be shut for three following days. 3. All shops, except those for provisions and medicines, shall also be kept shut; and all sorts of musical instruments, all dances customary in these days, all sorts of festivities and merriment in the public taverns, and every other sort of public amusement shall cease during the above named period. 4. A general mourning shall take place for twenty-one days. 5. Funeral ceremonies shall be performed in all the churches.

" A. MAVROCORDATO.

" GIORGIO PRAIDI, *Secretary.*

" *Missolonghi*, 19*th April* 1824."

The following letter, announcing the death of Lord Byron, has been addressed by Prince Mavrocordato, to the Secretary to the Greek Committee:—

" *Missolonghi*, 8*th* (20*th*) *April*, 1824.

" Sir, and my very dear Friend,—It is with the greatest affliction that I fulfil the duty of giving you the sad news of the death of Lord Byron, after an illness of ten days. Our loss is irreparable, and it is with justice that we abandon ourselves to inconsolable sorrow. Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances in which I am placed, I shall attempt to perform my duty towards this great man: the eternal gratitude of my country will perhaps be the only true tribute to his memory. The Deputies will communicate to you

the details of this melancholy event, on which the grief which I feel will not allow me to dwell longer. You will excuse—you will justify my being overwhelmed with sorrow; and accept the assurance of my devotion, and the high consideration with which I have the honour to be, Sir, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"A. MAVROCORDATO.

"To J. Bowring, Esq.
"Secretary to the Greek Committee."

From the Globe and Traveller.

England is thus deprived of the man to whom even those who have felt the most violent enmity towards some of his recent writings have not denied the title of the first poet of the age. His death is the more melancholy at a time when he devoted himself to a cause in which, in common with all generous minds, he felt the deepest sympathy—a cause of which it is enough to say, that it would have been worthy of his muse. The character of Lord Byron has already been the subject of very strict and not very friendly investigation; but it will be acknowledged, that if he fell into some of those errors which those who have too early an opportunity of gratifying all their wishes can scarcely escape from; and if in his mind there was occasionally something of that bitterness which arises in the very fountain of the Graces, he is now entitled to be remembered for the great qualities in which he has excelled all men of his age and rank—not for the

failings which he has shared with so many of them. His brilliant talents, and his careful cultivation of them, his benevolent heart, his aspirations for the happiness and liberty of mankind; and finally, his noble devotedness in the noblest struggle which this age has witnessed, will cause him to be numbered among the great men of whose memory England is proud, and whose premature loss it has been her fate to lament. The Greeks have requested and obtained the heart of Lord Byron, which will be placed in a Mausoleum in the country, the liberation of which was his last wish. His body will be brought to England.

From the Times.

With unfeigned regret we announce to our readers that Lord Byron is no more. His Lordship's death was the consequence of an inflammatory cold, which, after only ten days' continuance, carried to a premature grave the most remarkable Englishman of his generation. We know not how many of our countrymen may share the feelings with which this news has affected us. There were individuals more to be approved for moral qualities than Lord Byron—to be more safely followed, or more tenderly beloved; but there lives no man on earth whose sudden departure from it, under the circumstances in which that nobleman was cut off, appears to us more calculated to impress the mind with profound and unmingled mourning.—Lord Byron was doomed to pay that price which Nature sometimes charges for stupendous intellect, in the gloom of his imagination and the intractable energy of

his passions. Amazing power, variously directed, was the mark by which he was distinguished far above all his contemporaries. His dominion was the sublime—it was his native home; at intervals he plunged into the lower atmosphere for amusement, but his stay was brief. It was his proper nature to ascend: but on the summit of his elevation, his leading passion was to evince his superiority, by launching his melancholy scorn at mankind. That noblest of enterprises, the deliverance of Greece, employed the whole of Lord Byron's latter days—of his pecuniary resources, and of his masculine spirit. It was a cause worthy of a poet and a hero; and it is consolatory to find, that the people for whom he would have devoted his life seem to have felt the full value of his exertions and his sacrifices. The affectionate veneration in which our deceased countryman was held, appears as well from the private letter of Mavrocordato, as from the deep and universal mourning which was observed at Missolonghi, from the hour at which his death was made public. Had he but died in battle against slaves and infidels, for a Christian people struggling to be free, his own fame would have received its full consummation, and his wishes, as is well understood, their complete fulfilment.

From the British Press.

The death of Lord Byron, the sad intelligence of which reached London yesterday, is an event which we little expected to record. It falls on the public ear like a shock of deep private misfortune. He has sunk

to rest in the prime of his days, and in the zenith of his fame; he has left the world when his services could ill be spared, and we may add with truth, when they cannot be supplied. A more calamitous event could not have happened to Greece; all his aid, personal and pecuniary—all the energies of his body and of his mind, were put forth for the restoration of her freedom; to her cause his loss is irreparable. Lord Byron's genius was of the very first order; he was one of those characters from whose existence new eras date their commencement: that fresh career of society which is beginning in Europe wanted the stimulus of a mind like his to carry it onward to happiness and to glory: he was no lover of revolutions; he looked only to the improvement of which the political condition of mankind was capable, by the diffusion of knowledge, and the just estimate of independence. It was with these views that he aided Greece to the utmost of his means, to rescue herself from the chains of her oppressor, and rise again to life and liberty. We are not yet sufficiently recovered from the painful feelings with which the sudden intelligence of his death has impressed us, to enter into any detail of observation on his genius as a poet, or his character as a man. Now that his days are numbered, the world will do justice to both.

From the Morning Chronicle.

Thus has perished, in the flower of his age, in the noblest of causes, one of the greatest Poets England ever produced. His death, at this moment, is, no

doubt, a severe misfortune to the struggling people for whom he has so generously devoted himself. His character we shall not attempt to draw. He had virtues, and he had failings; the latter were in a great measure the result of the means of indulgence which were placed within his reach at so early a period of his life. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," said an inspired writer, and certainly it may be said that the gift of riches is an unfortunate one for the possessor. The aim which men, who are not born to wealth, have constantly before them, gives a relish to existence to which the hereditarily opulent must ever be strangers. Gratifications of every kind soon lose their attraction, the game of life is played without interest, for that which can be obtained without effort is never highly prized. It is fortunate for the great when they can escape from themselves into some pursuit, which, by firing their ambition, gives a stimulus to their active powers.—We rejoice to see Lord Byron engaged in a cause which afforded such motives for exertions, and we anticipated from him many days of glory.—But it has been otherwise decreed.

From the Herald.

A deeply mournful sensation was excited by the intelligence of the death of Lord Byron. Thus has the poetical literature of England lost one of its brightest ornaments, and the age decidedly its finest genius. Much of the notice which he attracted, and the ascendancy which he obtained, is no doubt attributable to

certain singularities in his temper and character, and even in the events of his life. But the vulgar only were swayed by his eccentricity. The prodigious splendour of his genius won admiration from the liberal, the learned, and the wise. There is scarcely any instance of poetical power of the first order displayed under such a variety of forms. His early poems certainly gave no promise of his future greatness. But their feebleness was, perhaps, a happy circumstance —it provoked a memorable criticism, which, in its turn, met with a severer and more memorable retaliation. Lord Byron vented his resentment in the satire. In the poem of Childe Harold, which soon followed, he vindicated the supremacy of his genius. It is in this poem, and the shorter poems, turning chiefly upon oriental scenes and circumstances, that Lord Byron is distinctively himself. He displayed, it is true, astonishing versatility as he advanced. He entered the domain of Italian and of the more modern German poetry—not as an imitator, but as a rival. It is hardly safe or discreet to speak of Don Juan, that truant offspring of Lord Byron's muse. It may be said, however, that with all its sins, the copiousness and flexibility of the English language were never before so triumphantly approved—that the same compass of talent—" the grave, the gay, the great, the small," comic force, humour, metaphysics, and observation—boundless fancy and ethereal beauty, and curious knowledge, curiously applied, have never been blended with the same felicity in any other poem. It would be easy to dwell upon some vices of taste—for it is with those only that we have to do—but they are

not to be thought of at a moment when England has lost her first poet, not yet arrived at the meridian of his life—perhaps not even of his genius—one who might yet have atoned to his country and to literature for the errors of his youth, by producing works which would place his name incontestibly still nearer those of Milton and Shakspeare, by no longer affording a pretext to cant and cavil, and interested sycophancy.

From the Examiner.

This melancholy news has startled as much as it has afflicted the public mind. His Lordship's friends *had been* alarmed some little time back by a *fit* he underwent: but it was since understood, that he was convalescent, and the danger entirely passed.

How strong and how universal is the melancholy sensation produced by the death of a man of genius! Every reader of his immortal writings is, at the least, an acquaintance—often an ardent and sympathising friend. The favourite passages imprinted on the memory recur at such a moment, and touchingly remind us, that we have lost one who had been a companion in so many interesting hours, and had enriched our minds with so many beautiful and ennobling associations. Throughout Great Britain, North America, and our colonial dominions, will this event produce a sensation not weakened by distance or locality; and in a less degree in France, Germany, and all the more enlightened countries of Europe, to which the poet's genius had been communicated by translations. In Greece, in-

deed, the shock is probably more felt than even in England. Admiration and gratitude had combined to make Lord Byron, when present there, the object of a sort of personal affection; and his death is to the Greeks a sudden blighting of political hopes, a dark cloud overshadowing their glorious prospects, the loss of valuable substantive aid, and the more sensible loss of the lustre which his great name shed upon their cause.

Cut off in the prime of life, and in the very summer of his mental power, his death is on that account rendered additionally painful in itself; yet he certainly could not have died under circumstances more favourable to his fame. He had already established a reputation as the great poetical ornament of his age; and he had acquired, in spite of the prejudices of rank and wealth, that honour and esteem from mankind, which are censured by a strong sensibility to their wrongs, and a vivid indignation against their oppressors. He was pursuing a career of glory, labouring hand and heart in the purest cause of modern times, on the most illustrious soil in the world. His celebrity as a patriot was bidding fair to rival his reputation as a poet—a rare conjunction of honours! He had the fortune which he thought Napoleon's reputation so much wanted, when he reproached him with not dying in the field of battle.

We shall take an early opportunity of discussing the character of Lord Byron, as a man and a poet; only observing here, that there never was a greater error than the one common among a certain class of bigots, of supposing him gloomy and misanthropical in tem-

per. He was, on the contrary, particularly social and cheerful with his friends: and his very faults resulted from an excessive susceptibility of impulses of all kinds, which is the opposite of sullenness and gloom. He had, it is true, as lively perception of the ridiculous and mean in human nature as Pope had, of whom he was an extreme admirer, and whom in many things he much resembled. But those persons must have read his poems with little profit indeed, who do not find in them perpetual proofs, that he had an equally fine sense of the beautiful, the delicate, the sublime, and the enjoying, in man. His face was indeed enough, to any one with the least notion of physiognomy, to refute the absurd falsehoods circulated respecting his natural disposition:—never was any face so made up of sensitiveness, so full of those little swellings which denote quick emotions.

Lord Byron's Residence at Venice.

The following notice which appears in the Appendix to the Doge of Venice, supplies a material passage in Lord Byron's history.

"The author of 'Sketches descriptive of Italy,' &c. one of the hundred tours lately published, is extremely anxious to disclaim a possible charge of plagiarism from 'Childe Harold' and 'Beppo.' He adds that still less could this presumed coincidence, arise from 'my conversation' as 'he had *repeatedly declined an introduction to me while in Italy.*'

"Who this person may be I know not, but he must have been deceived by all or any of those who 're-

peatedly offered to introduce him', as I have invariably refused to receive any English with whom I was not previously acquainted, even when they had letters from England. If the whole assertion is not an invention, I request this person not to sit down with the notion that he *could* have been introduced, since there has been nothing I have so carefully avoided as any kind of intercourse with his countrymen—excepting the very few who were a considerable time resident in Venice, or had been of my previous acquaintance. Whoever made him any such offer was possessed of impudence equal to that of making such an assertion without having had it. The fact is, that I hold in utter abhorrence any contact with the *travelling English*, as my friend the Consul General Hoppner, and the Countess Benzoni (in whose house the conversazione mostly frequently by them is held) could amply testify, were it worth while. I was persecuted by these tourists, even to my riding ground at Lido, and reduced to the most disagreeable circuits to avoid them. At Madame Benzoni's I repeatedly refused to be introduced to them; of a thousand such presentations pressed upon me, I accepted two, and both were to Irish women.

" I should hardly have descended to speak of such trifles, publicly, if the impudence of this 'Sketcher' had not forced me to a refutation of a disingenuous and gratuitously impertinent assertion; so meant to be; for what could it import to the reader to be told that the author had repeatedly declined an introduction? Even had it been true, which, for the reasons I have above given, is scarcely possible. Except

Lords Lansdowne, Jersey, and Lauderdale; Messrs. Scott, Hammond, Sir Humphrey Davy, the late M. Lewis, W. Bankes, M. Hoppner, Thomas Moore, Lord Kinnaird, his brother, Mr. Joy and Mr. Hobhouse. I do not recollect to have exchanged a word with another Englishman since I left their country: and almost all these I had known before. The others, and God knows there were some hundreds, who bored me with letters or visits, I refused to have any communication with, and shall be proud and happy when that wish becomes mutual."

NEWSTEAD ABBEY.

Newstead Abbey, a handsome vignette of which adorns our title page, is one of the most beautiful and chaste specimens of Gothic architecture in the kingdom. The embellishments which the Abbey received from Lord Byron, had more of the brilliant conception of the poet in them than of the sober calculations of common life. In many rooms which he had superbly furnished, but over which he had permitted so wretched a roof to remain, that in about half a dozen years the rain had visited his proudest chambers, the paper had rotted on the walls, and fell, in comfortless sheets, upon glowing carpets and canopies, upon beds of crimson and gold, clogging the wings of glittering eagles, and destroying gorgeous coronets. A gentleman who visited the Abbey, gives the following description of it:—

"The long and gloomy gallery, which, whoever

views will be strongly reminded of Lara, as indeed a survey of this place will awaken more than one scene in that poem, had not yet relinquished the sombre pictures 'of its ancient race.' In the study, which is a small chamber overlooking the garden, the books were packed up, but there remained a sofa, over which hung a sword in a gilt sheath, and at the end of the room, opposite the window, stood a pair of light fancy stands, each supporting a couple of the most perfect and finely polished skulls I ever saw, most probably selected, along with the far-famed one converted into a drinking cup, and inscribed with some well-known lines, from amongst a vast number taken from the burial-ground of the abbey, and piled up in the form of a mausoleum, but since recommitted to the ground. Between them hung a gilt crucifix.

"In one corner of the servants' hall, lay a stone coffin, in which were fencing gloves and foils; and on the wall of the ample, but cheerless kitchen, was painted in large letters, 'Waste not, want not.'

"During a great part of his Lordship's minority, the abbey was in the occupation of Lord G——, his hounds, and divers colonies of jackdaws, swallows, and starlings. The internal traces of this Goth were swept away; but without, all appeared as rude and unreclaimed as he could have left it. I must confess, that if I was astonished at the heterogeneous mixture of splendour and ruin within, I was more so at the perfect uniformity of wildness throughout. I never had been able to conceive poetic genius in its poetic bower, without figuring it diffusing the polish of its delicate taste on every thing around it: but here that

elegant spirit and beauty seemed to have dwelt, but not to have been caressed; it was the spirit of the wilderness. The gardens were exactly as their late owner described them in his earliest lays:—

'Thro' thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
Thou, the hall of my father's, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling gardens the hemlock and thistle
Now choke up the rose that late bloom'd in the way.'

"With the exception of the dog's tomb, a conspicuous and elegant object, placed on an ascent of several steps, crowned with a lambent flame, and pannelled with white marble tables, of which, that containing the celebrated epitaph is the most remarkable, I do not recollect the slightest trace of culture or improvement. The late Lord, a stern and desperate character, who is never mentioned by the neighbouring peasants without a significant shake of the head, might have returned and recognised every thing about him, except perchance an additional crop of weeds. There still gloomily slept that old pond, into which he is said to have hurled his lady in one of his fits of fury, whence she was rescued by the gardener, a courageous blade, who was the Lord's master, and chastised him for his barbarity. There still, at the end of the garden, in a grove of oak, two towering satyrs, he with his goat and club, and Mrs. Satyr with her chubby cloven footed brat, placed on pedestals at the intersections of the narrow and gloomy pathways, struck for a moment, with their grim visages, and silent shaggy forms, the fear into your bosom which is felt by the neighbouring peasantry at '*th' oud laird's devils.*'

"In the lake before the abbey, the artificial rock, which he filled at a vast expense, still reared its lofty head; but the frigate, which fulfilled old mother Shipton's prophecy, by sailing over dry land from a distant part to this place, had long vanished, and the only relics of his naval whim were the rock, his ship buoys, and the venerable old Murray, who accompanied me round the premises. The dark haughty impetuous spirit and mad deeds of this nobleman, the poet's uncle, I feel little doubt, by making a vivid and indelible impresion on his youthful fancy, furnished some of the principal materials for the formation of his Lordship's favourite, and perpetually recurring, poetical hero. His manners and acts are the theme of many a winter evening in that neighbourhood. In a quarrel, which arose out of a dispute between their game-keepers, he killed his neighbour, Chaworth, the lord of the adjoining manor. With that unhappy deed, however, died all family feud; and if we are to believe our noble bard, the dearest purpose of his heart would have been compassed could he have united the two races by an union with 'the sole remnant of that ancient house,' the present most amiable Mrs. Chaworth—the Mary of his poetry. To those who have any knowledge of the two families, nothing is more perspicuous in his lays than the deep interest with which he has again and again turned to this his boyish, his first most endearing attachment. The 'Dream' is literally their mutual history. The 'antique oratorie,' where stood 'his steed caparisoned, and the hill'

'—— crowned with a peculiar diadem
Of trees in circular array, so fixed,
Not by the sport of nature, but of man.'

are pictures too well known to those who have seen them to be mistaken for a moment.

"It is curious to observe the opinions entertained by country people, of celebrated literary characters, living at times amongst them. I have frequently asked such persons near Newstead, what sort of man his Lordship was? The impression of his energetic but eccentric character was obvious in their reply, He 's the d—l of a fellow for comical fancies. He flogs th'oud Laird to nothing; but he's a hearty *good* fellow for a' that.' One of these mere comical fancies, related by a farmer, who has seen it more than once, is truly Byronic:—He would sometimes get into the boat with his two noble Newfoundland dogs, row into the middle of the lake, then dropping the oars, tumble over into the middle of the water; the faithful animal would immediately follow, seize him by the coat collar, one on each side, and bear him away to land. Dogs tutored in this manner are invaluable, because they may be relied upon in cases of actual danger."

A SIGH FOR THE BARD.

Son of the sky! and hast thou sped
Back to thy native heaven again?
Lord of the lyre! and art thou dead,
And lies it tuneless on the plain?
And shall it never breathe again,
In whisper'd love, or, rising high,
Shoot round the earth its moral strain,
Loud as the thunder of the sky?

It cannot be: th' immortal fire,
Not kindled at an earthly flame,
Can never fade—can ne'er expire,
But burn eternally the same.
And men shall read and bless thy name,
While thy lov'd Freedom, far and wide,
Waves her proud banner, with thy name,
Highest inscribed, o'er land and tide.

And Kindness kneeling at her side,
And Love, with eyes of warmest glow,
And Satire with his whip for pride,
And Isis with her heaven-dipt bow,
And Friendship with her fondest vow,
And Valour with his firmest soul,
Shall join, and tell the world that thou
Shall last while years—while ages roll.

From Athos height the Greek shall call,
Andes shall answer to the cry,
"Thy name, thy verse, can never fall,—
They're things of immortality;
And Bigotry within his stye,
And Superstition in his cave,
And pyebald peeled Hypocrisy,
Shall feel that BYRON has no grave."

TRANSLATION OF CHILDE HAROLD.

"AMONG the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of Childe Harold, translated into *versi sciotti*—that is, a poem written in the *Spenserean Stanza*, into blank verse, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza, or of the sense!!"—Preface to the Prophecy of Dante.

B. Bensley, Printer, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.